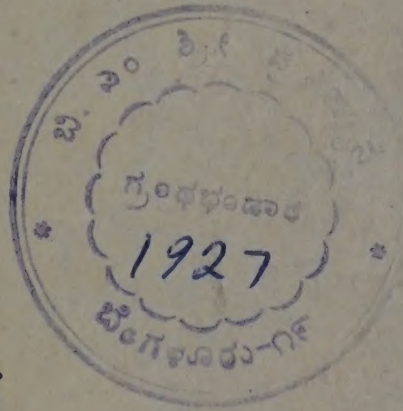


1927

Dr. P. NAGARAJA RAO, M A., D.Litt.

The Four Values in Indian Philosophy and Culture

(a study of the puruṣārthas)



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UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE

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SPECIAL LECTURES SERIES : 28

The Four Values in Indian Philosophy and Culture

(a study of the puruṣārthas)

Dr. P. NAGARAJA RAO, M.A., D.Litt.

Tagore Professor of Humanities

Madras University



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First edition—1970

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Price : Rs. 2

Foreign : \$ 1 2-00

Published by

The Director, Prasanga, University of Mysore,
Manasagangotri, Mysore-6

Printed by

The Literary Press, Saraswatipuram,
Mysore-9

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are extremely happy to present " The Four Values in Indian Philosophy and Culture " to the public in the present form.

We are under a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, Tagore Professor of Humanities, Madras University, for having kindly accepted our invitation to deliver two talks on the subject and in permitting us to publish them in the present form.

PRABHU SHANKARA
Director

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FIRST LECTURE

Faith, Artha and Kama

I

Today we are living amidst a society that is passing through a terrible and perplexing crisis. It is a truism that needs no elaboration. Not to be aware of it is the height of human insensitivity and not to state it in the interest of a baseless optimism is sheer affectation. The crisis is being felt at all levels in the individual's moral ideals, in the nation's activities, and in the state and international affairs. The present crisis is unique and in no wise like the collapse of imperial Rome or the disappearance of other ancient civilisations. The crisis in the past civilisations mostly is attributable to their lack of resources to meet adequately the clamouring and compelling needs of the people. Hence revolutions were staged in the past and wars won and lost to secure more land and riches.

The present day crisis is the reverse of it. We do not lack any resources, for we hold history's record for scientific achievement and

technological excellence. Ours is an age of science, and we have landed in the moon, split the atom, manipulated Nature's forces and harnessed them to human comfort and ease. We have reduced human drudgery to the minimum by making the gadgets do all the living for us. We have learnt to fly in air and swim under the water and have wrested, once for all the secrets of Nature by the use of our scientific knowledge and experiment. In short, our fight with Nature is fairly complete and we have been able in an admirably fair degree to conquer her vagaries. Science and technology have created a glorious value accepted by all, *The useful*¹ in the place of the traditional triad, "Truth, Beauty and Goodness" which are under eclipse. This value has sought to replace the traditional three by badly warping and crassly neglecting them.²

1. See Lewis Mumford, *The Transformation of Man*. We suffer from deep psychic anxiety, are cloven by emotional conflict beset by economic insecurity and assailed by political doubts.

2. See Tennyson's, *Palace of Art* :

" Three sisters

That doat upon each other, friends to man
Living together under the same roof

And never can be sundered without tears."

Civilization has come to mean the capacity to grow two blades of grasses where only one grows now. We do not lack resources, but still we are experiencing a formidable crisis in our lives. We all feel a deep split in our personality; we have the knowledge of good and right and have not the firm and necessary will not only to translate it into action, but we do the opposite. We profess ideals of universal decency and act in the most abominable ways. We know in the words of St. Paul,¹ "the good that we would and we do not, and the evil that we would not that we do". St. Augustine declares in dejection 'I know not how it is,' but an object of desire becomes more seductive when it is forbidden." Arjuna asks the Lord on bended knees, "why is it that men are driven to acts of sin forcibly much against their wills?"² There is at the heart of man a discrepancy between his intention and act. This split is perpetually in the minds of men. The split continues as long as man continues to be in an unregenerate state. Happiness, bliss or poise is possible for him only when he

1. St. Paul, *Romans*, VII, 19.

2. *Bhagavad Gītā*—III—36.

Jānāmi dharmam na ca ne pravṛtthiḥ

Jānāmi adharṇam na ca me nivṛtthiḥ

overcomes this split and becomes an integrated personality (*yuktātmā*) or a Yogi in the Gītā sense of the term.

This split in the heart and the soul of man. is responsible for the conflict in him. The complex nature of man is the result of his dual ancestry. He is the child of nature with its three *gunas*, and is also an aspect of divinity and is made in the image of God. In addition to this, he is distinguished from his less exalted brothers animals in the scheme of evolution. He shares with them, the life of the instincts and is also of the same chemical and physical substance in his composition. But with all these he stands out at the cross-roads of Evolution because of his power of self-consciousness, imagination, capacity to look before and after, and pine for what is not, and bring that state into being and clothe it with reality. He has the power of reason and is capable of ordering his emotions and instincts. Man is described by the three great philosophers differently, "Man is a rational animal" said Socrates, "Man is social animal" said Plato and "Man is a political animal" says Aristotle. The Indian philosophers and sages have seen a fourth aspect in

man and have described him as spiritual in his essence and real nature.

Man in his several activities seeks to attain bliss and avoid pain completely. He achieves and retains pleasure for sometime and is again plunged into gloom. He is not satisfied till he attains eternal bliss. The XVII century mystic pascal portrays in a celebrated passage with unmatched clarity the central conflict at the heart of man. "There is an internal war in man between reason and passion. Having both reason and passion, man cannot be without strife, being unable to be at peace with the one without being at war with the other".

The conflict is the result of man's excessive and destructive self-centredness in the unbridled pursuit of his desires as ends in themselves, in the complete ignorance of man's true nature and destiny. It arises first and foremost from a lack of a proper knowledge and faith in the transcendent values of life. Life must have a goal and then alone it can acquire meaning and purpose. If life is merely described as a physico-biological process with death as its terminus, it will acquire a dangerous quality and impell men to live a life of sensations and burn the candle

of life at both ends. Such a sensate view of life will make for and encourage men to live uninhibited life, a round of pleasures with no thought for the morrow, no consideration for the neighbour or morals. Man will have no impossible longings, nor will he ever seek to vex his soul with doubtful entities like God, Soul and Immortality. A purely sensate culture is confined to the here and now. There is no fun in motoring if we do not know the road on which it must run. Is there any joy in building one's home if one does not have a plan for it. If man should live well, and grow, he must know his manifest-destiny and why and what for he lives. Only the faith and knowledge of man's nature and high destiny can get him interested in life and invest it with meaning and purpose. Faith and knowledge will give him the necessary earnestness to undertake the quest, and face all the troubles and turmoils that confront him. Otherwise life loses all significance. Faith is necessary, *i.e.*, that man has a high destiny and its achievement ensures one bliss and ends all conflicts. It is the absence of this faith that answers to W.B. Yeats description of our age.

“ Things fall apart ; the centre cannot hold
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosened and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned
 The best lack all conviction and the worst are
 Full of passionate intensity.” ¹.

Let us turn to the east : The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* depicts the characteristics of the age without faith. “ It is a society where wealth is one virtue, passion, the sole bond of union between man and woman, falsehood—the source of success in life, sex—the sole meaning of enjoyment and outer trappings are mistaken for the inner spirit ”. ²

anṛtam eva vyavahra jayahatuh
 Stutvameva upabhogahatuh
 lingadhāna brahma sūthrameva vipratvahetuh
 meva āśramahatuh.

The Bhagavad Gītā describes in a number of excellent and memorable verses the activities and atrocities of the men of no faith, the children of darkness (*asuras*). “ These men of no faith do not know what is desirable action or what acts have to be abstained from, they do not discriminate the right from the wrong. They hold that the Lord is not the

1. W. B. Yeats, *The Second coming*.

2. IV—24-21. Artha eva abhigana hatuh dānamena aśeṣa dharma hetuh.

creator of the world? *and* attribute its origination to sheer natural process. They deny the existence of God and exult in their achievements and boast that they have no equals. They plan indefinitely to conquer all and deny God. They gather wealth unjustly and cry for more and more".¹ All that we see behind the picture of these men is their lack of faith or the absence of the postulation of a goal of life beyond the fact of the physical life. It is the absence of such a faith that tends men to act as they like. First, things happen in the head and then man translates it soon into acts. If we have absurd ideas we act atrociously. The lack of faith in a transcendent goal fails to give direction to life and makes it unendurable. We have a picture of such a man in Plato's Republic:² He calls such a Democratic man. I do not know why he does it. Probably wavered behaviour is an essential characteristic of men in a democracy. "The democratic man spends as much time and money in his superfluous pleasures as on the necessary ones . . . He sets all his pleasures on a footing of equality denying to none equal rights and allows

1. Gītā, XVI, 7 to 19.

2. *The Republic*, 561.

each (pleasure) in turn as it presents itself to succeed to the government of his soul until it is satisfied. When he is told that some pleasures should be pursued as arising from the desires of a higher order, others chastised and enslaved because the desires are base ; he will shut the gates of the citadel against the messengers of truth, shaking his head and declaring that one appetite is as good as another and that all must have their equal rights. So he spends his days indulging in the pleasures of the moment now intoxicated with wine and music then taking to a spare diet and drinking nothing but water ; one day in hard training and the next day doing nothing at all, the third day apparently immersed in study. Every now and then he takes part in politics and jumps to his feet to say or to do whatever comes into his head. Or he will set out to rival some one whom he admires, a soldier perhaps, or if fancy takes him a man of business". We find that lack of faith in a transcendent goal of life, paralyses our capacity for integration and we are wrecked by the pulls of the senses and their impulsion. Peace and integration become impossible when we live as we like. Living as we like is the characteristic of a barbarian

in the words of Mathew Arnold. The purely naturalistic picture of man does not do justice to his complex nature. Naturalism and Scientific Materialism admit 'the reality of the present life and affirm the validity of sense perception' and discredit the operation of the Supernatural. They do not look beyond the sense-world. They interpret man in the terms of a physical entity. The creed of Naturalism is enlivened by the touch of *Modern Humanism*. Humanism looks upon man as the ultimate category. They envisage the goal of a successful, happy and prosperous life of man on earth as the ideal to work for. They do not indent on any super-natural factors. They believe that man has enough potential strength in him to encounter all evils. The humanists work for a paradise on earth. Man is the measure of all things for them. He is captain of his ship and the master of his soul. They believe in a good life, but not in a God. Besides the Laws of Nature, the humanists admit the values of morality. They exhort us to be good and do good to others and live in harmony and amity. Man to the humanist is not only a physical being but also a social and rational individual. All the secular ideologies are one in confining man's

life and destiny between the two limits of *birth* and *death*. They do not regard man as a spiritual entity with a transcendent destiny.

Among the Indian systems of philosophy, the Vedanta in its different forms is the living religion of Hindus. They look upon man as essentially spiritual. He is not merely a body and plus a mind. He is atman. He is not the senses, nor the mind nor the five (kosas) sheaths, but is that which works them. There is at the heart of man an ageless, imprisoned splendour unaffected by anything external. It is not the observable personality. It is deeper than thought and feeling and its light is unextinguishable. Human life is not the mere effective animal volition, nor is it an instrument of material forces, nor a plaything of blind material factors. In essence, man is an immortal spirit with an effective will (Swatantra Karta). Human life is a blessed privilege. Man has certain unique characteristics. He is distinguished from rest of created entities by his capacity for knowledge and freedom of will. (Jñāna Karmādhi Kara). Śrī Śankara in his commentary in Taithiriya Upanisad¹ raises the question and answers it. In what

1. *Taithiriya* : II-I, I.

does the pre-eminence of man consist, he answers 'in his competence for Karma and knowledge'. Sophocles the great Greek dramatist, acclaimed wonders are many, but there is no wonder wilder than man". The Mahābhārata¹ thunders "To you I declare this holy mystery, there is nothing nobler than man".

Guhyam Brahma tad idam bravimi
na manusat sresthataram hi kincit

Once we accept the spiritual nature as the essence of man and are convinced of its potentiality, we have discovered the goal of life and are on the road for realisation. The aim and purpose of life is to unfold the spirit in man that is to say, we must realise the true nature of our being which is divine. This is briefly referred to by that master word in Indian philosophy *moksa*. Human birth, ceremonial purity, rational reflection, Guru, instructed scripture taught reality, and the company of good men awakening us into the pursuit of supreme spiritual ideal evoke the (*mumukswtva*) desire for Moksa in us. The ideal of moksa is not achieved in a vacuum, but has to be worked for here and

1. XII, 300, 20,

now. It is not easy of achievement, but not impossible to attain. We have to swelter and slog our mind and the senses to attain it. We have to make the choice and choose the good (Preyas) and not the pleasant and not stop at that.¹ The supreme spiritual ideal has to be worked for in many lives, with unremitting moral effort.² The mere desire for moksa does not bring it to us. Let us remind ourselves that hell is paved with intentions". We have to realise mokṣa with our effort. It is not the pursuit of the willo of the wisp. Moksa is the chief human aspiration (Puruṣārtha).

The average Hindu believes that all his activities should be purposive and when he undertakes the performance of any of them, in his daily resolve (samkalpa) he states that he seeks to achieve as the result of the performance of his acts the four-fold human aspirations "*Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksa, cathurvidha puruṣhārtha siddhyartham karma karisye.*"

II

Human Life is looked upon by Indian thinkers and sages as the training ground

1. See *Katha*, I, II, I to III.

2. Gītā—VI--45 and VII--3, and 19.

(sādhana kṣetra) for man to unfold his potentialities and integrate them into a pattern. The human being is a blend of the divine and diabolic; he is dust and divinity combined. He has to train himself to hold back the cussedness and lust in him and to nourish the divine element. Hinduism has proclaimed a scheme of fourfold value (four aspirations) as governing the growth of human life. These can be classified under two heads; the first two values, *artha* (possessions) and *kāma* (passions) are the basis of human existence. The life of man consists in his desires. He is described by the Upanisads as a collection of desires. "As is his desire, so is his nature". To fulfil the desires, man has to earn and gather material aid, i.e., wealth. All such material aid is called *artha*. It is an instrumental value, and should not be pursued as an end in itself. Man is not only an economic being; for other aspects also characterize his life. The pursuit of wealth becomes a value (*puruṣārtha*) only when it does not contravene the canons of social justice and morality (*Dharma*). Otherwise it becomes a "dis-value" and stands condemned. Both passions (*kama*) and possessions (*artha*) have to be regulated by Dharma. The term *artha*

comprises the whole range of tangible objects that can be possessed, enjoyed, shared or lost and which we daily require for our upkeep.

Artha is absolutely necessary for man's life. It is the source and sustenance of all our virtues, not to speak of the mere gratification of desires. Without wealth virtues become impracticable. Poverty is never glorified as a virtue. The common-sense poet Bhartrhari sings the praise of the functions of wealth in ten verses.¹ He points out the need for it if men are to live with dignity. It is wealth that enables us to live independently without appealing to others for assistance. We are asked to adventure forth on the high seas to secure fortune.² If a man cannot support himself and his family on the material plane, how can he work for *moksa*, which is very difficult? Even those who talk of *sanyasa*, i.e., renunciation, must acquire something to give up, otherwise they can only renounce nothing; such a *sanyasa* is a mockery of the concept. Hindu ethical thinkers have insisted on the necessity of a man's earning his livelihood by the sweat of his

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1. *Nītiśatakam*, Section 4. (There is a beautiful English rendering of the text by Sri Anronindo.)
 2. This saying is attributed to the Tamil Poet Avvai.

brow while he is fit, strong and young. To achieve anything substantial in human life one must be free from indigence and misery and must enjoy a certain economic competence. One must seek as far as possible to be self-sufficient.

Dharma is earned by *artha* and by *dharma* *artha* is earned. The one is the means and support of the other. *Artha* is the source of the whole world. The loss of wealth spells ruin. *Moksa* cannot be attained by mere poverty.

Arjuna in the Mahabharata holds the view that *Dharma* and *Kama* are limbs of *artha*. In the Ramayana, Lakshmana eloquently praises the function and the worth of wealth. He says :¹

From wealth amassed and increased all activities proceed as rivers from mountains. For the person of little power and energy, bereft of wealth, all actions are extinct, like rivulets in summer. If a person abandons wealth, he seeking happiness, begins to commit sin and wrong and leads a sinful life with increased longing for enjoyment. For the wealthy exist friends and relations. He who has wealth is regarded as a man of importance by people. He is considered a learned man. He is

1. *Vālmīki Rāmāyana*, VI, 32-38.

lucky and is intelligent. . . . To the man of wealth Dharma and kama and all else are helpful. (The man of poverty, desirous of wealth and seeking it, finds it difficult to get.

The importance of wealth and its positive role as a contributory force in the development of man is affirmed by Indian thinkers. Money is an indispensable means for the formation and growth of society, for the promotion and cultivation of commerce, industry, and scientific research and discovery. For the destruction of evil forces money is necessary. To the Hindus, an affluent society is not necessarily unspiritual. Poverty, famine, and pestilence were regarded as divine visitations resulting from lack of integrity in rulers and impurity in administration. In the past, the opulence of India fired the cupidity of many foreigners who overran her. The Hindu sages were not unaware of the potentialities of money. They were only anxious that it should be used with self-control and a perfect knowledge of its functions. Shri Aurobindo observes :

—*power, wealth and sex* are the strongest attractions for the human ego and they are mostly misheld and misused by those who retain them. The seekers or keepers of wealth are

more often possessed rather than its possessors ; few escape entirely the distorting influence stamped on it by its long seizure.

It is not the possession that is the evil but the bad use to which it is put. Vidura states in *Mahabharata* :

“ There are some people who have the conceit of learning, others have the conceit of wealth, yet others have the conceit that they are born in a renowned family. Learning, wealth and good birth are sources of conceit to those who lack self-control. To the disciplined they are the very reasons for the exercise of self-control ”.

Property is upheld as a necessary institution by the Hindu thinkers, but the holder of it is asked to use it for just purposes and hold it as its trustee. This concept comes very near Gandhiji's trusteeship theory. Property is not given to man for self-indulgence and the gratification of all desires. Kālidāsa, in his saga of Raghu rulers, exemplifies the ideals according to which instrumental values such as wealth, desires etc. must be used. The Raghu kings “ acquired wealth in order to give away ; spoke sparingly in order to be truthful ; were desirous of conquests for fame only ; and entered upon married life for progeny.”¹ We should not have an ascetic loathing for

1. See *Raghuvamśam* I. 7.

money and be afraid of it. We must use it wisely. Manu requires us to give a part of our money in charity, and keep a part for the rainy day, and spend the rest upon our family, dependents and ourselves. In short, "all wealth belongs to the Divine and those who hold it are its trustees, not possessors." It is with them today ; tomorrow it may be elsewhere. All depends on the way they discharge their trust while it is with them ; in a proper spirit, with the deep consciousness of how they use it.

Spirituality does not put a ban on money, but seeks to acquire it for right use. To neglect it would be to strengthen the enemy, who would use the money for the increase of evil. We should not treasure up all our wealth, but must use it for social purposes. One has to be entirely selfless, scrupulous and exact and careful in the use of money. Purity in matters of money is a great virtue (*artha suddhi*).

Reasonable self-protection must always be kept in view. "Surely the self has always to be protected." Wealth is one of the great protectors.

The uninformed critic asserts that India is a nation of anchorites, all of them ready to

die and go to heaven. Nothing is farther from the truth than this fallacy. There is little authority in Indian thought to support it. The Indians never despised vital aims or social satisfactions and obligations. They conceded reality to life and its needs and did not neglect its demands and duties. They had a social conscience. Kautilya in his *Artha Sastra* states that it was a criminal offence liable to punishment by fine or imprisonment for a man to turn an anchorite or take *sanyasa* without making adequate provisions for his family and dependents. He had to take a no-due slip from the town or village magistrate.

The Hindu nation's love of beauty and its secular genius are seen in many of its inventions : e.g., the number zero, the arts of drama, dance, music, sculpture, architecture, etc. They have developed many of the fine arts to great heights. The *Taittiriya Upanisad* records the prayer of the aspirant for money, grains, cattle, children and a life of a hundred years. The Hindu mind never neglected the economic values, but saw that they were not abused. A mild, non-violent type of socialism is advocated in the *Bhagavadpurana*. It states : "Living beings have a right only to what is necessary

for satisfying their hunger ; he who feels like acquiring more is a thief and deserves punishment.”¹

The Hindu outlook did not stand for an *acquisitive society* nor for an *affluent society* without any State control. It stood for a *Dharmic society*. It allowed men to gain as much wealth as possible without contravening the principles of *Dharma*. The Hindu mind was not doctrinaire in its approach, and did not believe in the doctrine of absolute equality. It believed that each should develop to his best in the manner that suited his grain and *svabhava*. They knew the true implications of the doctrine of equality. They proclaimed an optimum ideal for mankind which is summed up in the Gita phrase: *sūrva-bhuta-hite-ratah*:—the good of all: *sarvodaya*, of Gandhiji. The Hindu never declares that “all men are equal,” but that all men must be happy (*sarve janah sukhino bhavantu*). The Hindu view of social organization is democracy. But it is not the democracy where what the majority think is law. It does not believe in the cult of members, which, in the words of Mathew Arnold, gives us “a new

1. VII,-14.8

type of barbarism." It is the sort of democracy which is described by Gerald Heard as "Organic";

"the rule of a people who have organized themselves in a living and not a mechanical relationship, where, instead of all men being said to be equal, which is a lie, men are known to be of *unequal value*, could they but find the position in which their potential "contributions" could be realized."¹

Manu rejects the different views, "that Dharma alone, or that Dharma and wealth alone or that wealth and enjoyment are the most important values. He holds that all the three harmoniously cultivated jointly constitute the threefold end of human life."² This represents the most essential current of Hindu social philosophy and ethics.

The Second fundamental aspiration or value envisaged by Hindu Ethics is *Kama*. It is wrong to translate it as the desire for sex only. It is the desire of all things in general. The desire for liberation is excluded from this term, as that desire is accorded the status of separate supreme value, *Moksa*. *Kama* is the cluster of desires a man cherishes. Psychologically speaking a man is nothing more than

1. *Man the Master*, p. 129.

2. Manu, II.224.

the complex of his thoughts and the longings of his heart. The longings of the heart are described as *Kama*. For the gratification of our desires, we need the wherewithal which *Artha* supplies.

According to Hinduism, all the desires of the heart are not to be approved. They need to be regulated and co-ordinated into a perfect integral whole. No one desire is to be elevated into an end and pursued exclusively. The desires of the heart are not all of equal ethical value. There is the need to keep some of them in check, and there are others to be carefully enjoyed and not recklessly indulged in. Hence the necessity for self-control. All duties have self-control for their end (*Sarvadharmāḥ manonigraha-lakṣaṇāntāḥ*).

Self-control is nothing more than the object oriented life. It is liberation from the lifeless dull, mechanical impulsion of our desires. It is the assertion of the freedom of man to stand above the swarm of emotions, sway of impulses, pressure of the opinion of others, and temptations of sense-life governed merely by considerations of the pleasure of the moment and ignoring the concept of an enduring happiness.

“Self-control can save men from sinking back to the level of animals. It rescues them from mean motives, humiliating weaknesses, jealous attitudes, and cussedness.” No virtue is possible without it. Self-control implies physical and moral courage, which entail the necessity and gives strength to withstand the loss of physical pleasure and the gifts of men and popularity. The Upanisads in the East and Plato in the West have taught the need for self-control in vivid symbolism. The *Kathopanishad* declares :

Know thou that self is the master of the chariot, and that the body is the chariot ; that the intellect is the charioteer, and that the mind is the rein. The senses are the horses, and the objects of the senses are paths for them. The true and real enjoyer, in the opinion of the wise, is one who lives in the harmony of the senses, body and mind.

He who has no understanding and whose mind is unrestrained — his senses, unmanageable, are like unruly horses of a charioteer. But he who has understood and whose mind is restrained — his senses are under the control like the good horses of a charioteer.¹

The power of withstanding the sway of pleasant feelings and sensations can save us from

1. *Katha II-4.*

physical disaster and economic ruin. Self-control alone gives us a governable mind and and steadfast wisdom. Without it, our will becomes irresolute and infirm in purpose. Hence its importance in the art of life. The Gita persistently preaches it and describes it as *ātma samyama yoga*. An undistracted mind with a singleness of purpose is the chief requirement of man.

Kama or desire by itself is not wrong, but has to be hedged in by the behests of Dharma. Our desires are gales and they carry us away if we abandon effort. They do not get subdued automatically. It is folly to hope that somehow we can overcome temptations and lusts if we do nothing about them. The only way in which evil grows in this world is by our refusing to do anything to eradicate it. Self-Control does not come all at once. It involves a good deal of pain to cut ourselves off from pleasant sense-activities. The eternal problem confronting man is the choice between the pleasant and the good, between inclination and duty in Kant's language or between life eternal and death, in the words of Christ.

The impluses, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and other human failings give us

battle in different forms. They take on numerous guises. They go underground only to re-emerge in a different form. It is of no use to merely repress them, for they return through unforeseen outlets. Some foolishly imagine that desires can be quelled by complete gratification. Oscar Wilde's statement that the best way of overcoming a temptation is by yielding to it is nothing more than a glib saying. Manu points out that "our desires are never quelled by enjoyment or gratification of them. They grow like the flames fed by the butter or ghee."¹ Marcus Aurelius writes: "The desires of the senses draw us hither and thither, but when the hour is past, what do they bring us but remorse of conscience and dissipation of the spirit?" Mere rational speculation is not a powerful enough deterrent. Any moment, man's composure can fly to the winds, leaving him entirely at the mercy of his overwhelming passion. It requires not only a stoic mind but God's grace to withstand the constant, persistent pressure of temptation.

1 na jātu kāmah kāmānām.
 upabhogena śāmyate
 havisākṛṣṇavartimeva
 bhūya eva abhivandhate I-75.

Self-control and earnest prayer, according to the Gita, are of avail against the lure of the senses which is there to inveigle us frail mortals.

The life of impulse and passion is strong. They blur the vision of man and confuse his understanding. *Kama*, as an aspiration of man, manifests itself in sex. The impulse, Hinduism says, must be curbed. The entire *Rāmāyana* is an illustration of the two types; the one who is lured by sex into doing anything, and the other the hero, who keeps it under perfect control. Man, in pursuit of the sensational life and false happiness, spares no efforts and counts danger, suffering and loss as nothing. Preoccupation with sex distorts all values and makes men impulsive fools. They go quite mad in its pursuit. Sex is the fire in the blood of man and it can burn up his whole personality. Some schools of psychology boost sex and advertise it a thousandfold, giving it express academic backing.

Hinduism does not advocate the starvation of vital impulses. We are only asked to regulate them in such a manner as not to endanger society or one's mental health. We are not to thwart our impulses but to harness

them to noble ends. We are not asked to deny ourselves the normal pleasures of life. We are only exhorted not to make them ends in themselves nor to over emphasise the importance and value of any one aspiration. Moderation is the doctrine of the Hindus. The Gita advises us not to go to extremes. Yoga is not for him who eats too much or abstains too much. It is not for him who sleeps too much or keeps awake too long. For the man who is temperate in food and recreation who is restrained in action, whose sleeps and waking are well regulated there ensues yoga which destroys all sorrow.¹

The one law that should govern the indulgence of desires is that such indulgence should not contravene the good of society and Dharma (righteousness). Lord Krishna in the Gita states that He is "that desire which is not opposed to Dharma." Every worldly ambition, every form of gratification of senses has to be in proper balance, without being overvalued or treated as an end. The pleasures of life, when viewed as ends in themselves, turn out to be expressions of egoism resulting in conflict and tragedy. They poison life's very texture. On the other hand,

1. Gita. VI—16-17

rightly viewed, all pleasures and experiences can be opportunities for the development of the inner and permanent side of our nature.

Sveccha-vihara (licence) is not *swatantrata* (freedom). Common sense hedonism is an over simplified picture of man and a one-dimensional theory of ethics. It is a theory of the first look and not a product of logical thought. The unanalytical and untutored deliverances of these senses cannot function as the criteria of right and wrong, or truth and error. We need to realise that our life of impulse is to be guided by and integrated with the indwelling spirit in us. The Indian theory of *purusarthas*, the four fold aspiration of man, pays equal attention to all sides of human nature and co-ordinates them all in the *summum bonum* of life.

It is wholly a false view, though one that has been held by many unsympathetic critics, that Hinduism is other-worldly, that it despises the vital aims, social satisfaction, obligations and the aesthetic life. This view has arisen through a misunderstanding of the two central concepts of Vedanta, *Moksa and Maya*. It is a caricature to describe India as a nation of sages and anchorites, all of them eager to die and proceed to the next world.

Hinduism has never been unaware of the needs of the body which are all potential vehicles in different fields for the spiritual realisation. It has to its credit a vast record of reasearch in different fields, *e.g.* medicine, mental sciences, and fine arts. The average human being is asked to marry and enjoy the disciplined pleasures of life, which include those of sex. What is prohibited is only anarchic sex indulgence promiscuously sought. Further, pre-marital and extra-marital relations are ruled out. Sex is looked upon as a sacrament, and as means for rearing up healthy and intelligent progeny. The great student and authority on sex, Havelock Ellis, writes :

Sexual life (in India) has been sanctified and divinized to a greater extent than in any other part of the world. It seems never to have entered into the heads of the Hindu legislators that everything natural could be offensively obscene, a singularity which pervades all their writings, but is no proof of the depravity of their morals. Love in India, both as regards theory and practice, possesses an importance which it is impossible for us to even conceive.¹

The life of the householder is an institution which embodies the genius of sane spirituality. It has been praised by all Hindu

1. Studies in the psychology of sex, VI, p. 120.

social thinkers for its great contribution to the ethical thought of the world based on the true understanding of the psychology of men and women. Renunciation is not advocated as a remedy for the impatient or the frustrated. Each individual has to discharge a threefold obligation to the world in return to the gift of life.¹ These are : (a) the debt to the (*devatas*) gods : (b) the debt to our (*pitrs*) ancestors : and (c) the debt to (*rsis*) sages. The attempt to discharge these debts makes man an ethical being and brings about swift regeneration in his nature. The individual has to study the scriptures, understand them, and discuss their pros and cons with his teacher who instructs him until they sink into him as convictions. Study of the spiritual books is a must for the regeneration of man. It equips him with divine knowledge. The second obligation is to have children and live for some time as an house holder. The third debt is to the sages. This consists in the performance of sacrifices. The central idea of all sacrifice is to give something of ours to others. The Upanisads speak of three virtues—*yagna*, *dana* and *tapas*—as necessary for the spiritual growth of man. In another context, the ethical message of the

1. Manu VI, 36.

Upanisads is spelt out as “*Damyata, datta, dayadhwam*” (self-control, charity and compassion). The individual householder is to live an active moral life, which has immense social significance. The Iśa in its remarkable first two mantras wherein Gandhiji rightly sees the entire wisdom of the Upanisads, asks us to live a hundred years on the condition that we work hard and strive for self-development through active social participation, wearing the badge of self renunciation, and banishing the greed for others wealth.

Hinduism has a scheme of fivefold sacrifice (*pañcayajna*) prescribed for the regeneration of man: (1) *Brahmayajna*, i.e., the sacrifice to the Ultimate Reality which is the supreme value. This sacrifice is in the form of reverent study of the scriptures under a competent and illumined teacher(guru). This is described as listening (*śravaṇa*): (2) *Pitryajna*, the sacrifice we make through oblation to our ancestors in the form of ceremonies on the New Moon Day, and on the days of their departure. This sacrifice reminds us of the continuity of our life. (3) *Devayajna*, the sacrifice we make through offer to the presiding deities in Nature who nourish us. (4) *Bhutayajna*, the sacrifice or the food we

offer to spirits and animals around us. (5) *Manusya yajna*, the sacrifice in the form of hospitality which we show to our fellow human beings. This scheme of the five sacrifices and the three debts that man has to discharge to society is an eloquent testimony to the significance and importance attached to social life by the Hindus.

It is on record that the householder cannot go away and renounce ordinary life without discharging his duties. So it is wrong to describe India as a nation of anchorites and her ethics as other-worldly. One has only to look around at her fine arts, literature and music to know how rich her cultural advancement is.

WILL DURANT observes ; —

"It is true that even across the Himalayan barriers, India has sent to us unquestionable gifts such as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in future. As invention, industry and trade bind the countries together, or as they fling us into conflict with Asia, we shall study its civilizations more closely and shall absorb, even in enmity some of its ways and thoughts. Perhaps

in return for conquest, arrogance and spoilation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit and a unifying and pacifying love of all living things."

SECOND LECTURE

Dharma and Moksha

Among the fundamental aspirations of men Dharma takes the place of pride. It is the supreme Hindu moral ideal. The first two values *artha* and *kama* (wealth and passions) are instrumental, hedonic values. They are not ends in themselves, and should not be so pursued. If they are erected into ends, they turn out to be disvalues and not the desirable aspirations of man (*purusārthas*). *Kama* and *artha* are what man shares in common with animals. The *Hitopadesa* observes: 'food, sleep, fear and copulation are common to men and animals, what distinguishes man is the additional possession of the sense of values (dharma). Bereft of the value-sense man is on par with animals'.¹ It is the moral sense that raises man from his semian ancestry to human heritage. Dharma is the chief regulative value. To put it in one

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1. ahāra nidrā bhaya maithunam ca
sā nānya metat pasubhir narānām
dharmo hi tesām adhika viseso
dharmena hi nāt pasubhir samānāh.

sentence the values of *artha* and *kama* are to be regulated by *Dharma* to help us to attain *moksa* and live in peace on earth. The author of the *Vais'esika Sūtras* opens with a definition of *dharma* which embraces liberation and welfare (*nisreyas* and *abhudaya*) :

The term *Dharma* is translated in many ways : All the different meanings converge to disclose that it is the moral ideal. The Hindu view of life postulates that the universe in which we live and strive for liberation is essentially moral and is not neutral. The law of righteousness governs the world through and through. The universe is a just universe. *Dharma* is organic to its structure. It holds that natural phenomena is guided by inviolable laws that ensure the conservation of moral values. This faith implies that the good and bad acts of men give rise to appropriate like effects. This is true not only of man's gross outer acts, but also his motives and inner desires. The Rg Vedic Law of *rta*, which is eternal makes for order, regularity, harmony and the law-abiding nature of the universe. The natural law of *rta*, is the law of *karma* in the lives of individuals.

The term *Dharma* is rendered as duty, injunctions regarding moral and ritual actions,

customs, the law of ones being etc., In the history of Indian philosophic thought, we find a remarkable exposition and connection of three great concepts, *Rita*, *Satya*, and *Dharma*.¹ Dharma is based on truth and it abjures the use of violence or coercive action of any form. It is non-violence. *Satya*, is speaking the truth and Dharma its translation in action. "While Rita denotes the mental perception of truth and satya denotes its exact expression in mind Dharma is the observance of the same in the conduct of life." Satya is truth in words and Dharma is truth in deeds. Further, there is the immisible implication that Dharma abjures violence. Dharma is known by one who is not merely intelligent, "he must be a friend of all and who is devoted to the welfare of all in thought word and deeds". Surprisingly pleasant it is to read in Mahabharata when it says "that the principles of Dharma have been enunciated for the sake of non-violence towards all beings. Whatever is imbued with nonviolence is dharma (S'anti 109—V. 15)"

1 See K. Balasubrahmanya aiyar, *The fundamental aspirations. A man according to Indian thought*. Kuppawami Sastri research institute : 1952.

The Hindu mind has looked upon Dharma as the opposite of physical might. It is stated in the Brahadaranyaka that "the Lord after creating the four castes, felt his work not completed. So he created over and above all the castes, Dharma which is the form of supreme happiness and welfare. It is the controller of the kings. There is nothing higher than Dharma. Hence a weak man seeks and desires (successfully) to control a strong man through Dharma, as the king does by the arm of law. That Dharma is truth." Sri Sankara commenting on this passage writes instructively. The creator was not certain whether kings alone are enough. He was not certain of king's power. So by way of a best corrective and check, the Lord created Dharma to afford the weak strength. Among the Indian philosophical systems, we see a double unity, *a philosophical unity* and *an ethical unity*. All of them accept that the goal of life is a transcendent state of existence after attaining which there is no return to the world of births and deaths (*samsāra*). It is a state of unalloyed bliss called *moksa*. The nature of *moksa* is described differently in various systems, but the ideal of *moksa* as a chief value for man's life is accepted. Further,

the fact that moksa is attainable only through a life governed by Dharma is also accepted. The regulative function of Dharma is accorded an universal acceptance even by non-theistic systems. One of the schools of Mimamsa has erected Dharma into an end. It is not instrumental to any further end. The Prabha-kara view is reminiscent of Kant's categorical imperative.¹ They hold that Dharma is an absolute value which has nothing to do with our likes and dislikes. Its adoption is not commendable to us on the grounds of its appeal to the fruits it yields and the threats it holds out for their non observance. Its command is not contingent or conditional. It is an absolute unconditional imperative.

The concept of Dharma is commended on different grounds. The first and the foremost meaning of Dharma is, that it sustains, nourishes and holds up and the social order. Society crumbles and falls into pieces when there is a transgression of Dharma. Dharma holds the equilibrium among the

1. See M. Hiriyanna's *address on The Indian conception of values* Bhandarkar Institute, Poona, September 9th p. 1937.

deeds of men.¹ It assumes our survival which is the foundation for all ethical activities. Further, Dharma is commended on pragmatic grounds. "Dharma destroys him that violates it and protects him that adheres to it."² says Manu. The concept of Dharma comes very neary to Plato's comprehensive ideal of justice: "It is the test and measuring rod for us in the evaluation and assessment of the qualities of civilizations."³

Our National Poet, the poet's of the poet Valmiki in his immortal Epic, *Srimad Rāmāyana* gives us clear and distinct pictures of three civilizations of *Ayodhya*, *Lanka* and *Kiskānda*. He highlights the contrast between them in a significant manner. The civilizations of Lanka and Kiskinda had all the affluence and the might of arms, but were bereft of the essence of Dharma. That was the head and front of their offending. Hanuman is at once dazed and laments at the sight of Ravana's glory.

1. Dhāraṇāt dharmamity ābuh
Dharmena viduṣṭāṁ prajāṁ

2. Dharmo raksate raksitah
Dharmo hanti hantakah

3. See Manu for sources of Dharma II-6.

He exclaims :¹ “ Oh what a great king, what beauty, what majesty and what strength, if only unrighteous conduct (adharma) was not asserting and powerful, Ravana would be Indra himself ! ” The defect of adharma brought him down. Sita in her sober and majestic parley asks Ravana when he was talking to her in blind amorous terms : “ Are there not wise people in your kingdom to counsel you properly and make you follow dharma, or do you discard their advice and tempt fate to ruin you. Great kingdoms are destroyed when their kings walk on the road to sin. By your sins, this beautiful city of Lanka with all its inhabitants and wealth is going to be destroyed.”² The epic portrays in contrast the character of Sri Ramachandra, the hero as not only the closest adherent of

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1. aho rupamohodhairyam
 satvamoho dhutiyih
 aho rāksa rāgaśya
 sarva lakshana yuktatā
 yadyadharam na balavānsyat ayam
rāksasaseśvarah
 syād ayam suralokasya sakrasyāpi raksitā
 2. eva santo, na va sasti
 sato vā narev vartase
 tatāhi viparītate bhuddir acāra varjitā

Dharma in any defined and undefined eventuality, but also as its great exemplar (*Dharmatma*). All through his life Sri Ramachandra saw that he never was after possessions (*artha*) or after the gratification of desires (*kama*) when it contravened the behests of Dharma. Vālmīki has personified Dharma in the personality of Rama. He enjoyed life, living in harmony with dharma. He gave up the kingdom that has to be his legitimate heritage, because he wanted to make his father's words true. Sentimental considerations, casuistic pleadings, tears, (*prayopaveśa*) set in strikes, were all of no avail when set against Ramachandra by a host at *Chitrakuta*. He saw the path of dharma clearly and did not swerve from it. With super-human passion he kept his word, but did not budge from his duty of establishing dharma wherever it was assailed, be it in the Dandakaranya forest or in Kiskinda or Lanka. His protecting arm and prowess always stood for Dharma. Rama's rejection of Sita is the greatest sacrifice or renunciation he did in order to be above board. He suffered the separation as keenly as Sita did. We should not forget that he was a monogamous hero who "spoke not a second time, darted forth not a second shaft,

looked not at no other woman for a moment even. We have Sita's certificate to vouchsafe the truth. "The evil begot desire are threefold, the prominent evil is falsehood, and the other two are greater evils. They are association with others wives, and doing harm to others without any cause for hostility. Falsehood has never been thine, nor it can ever be thine in future. You are not even in fancy guilty of going after other women, which sin destroys all religious merit".¹ Rama is the visible embodiment and image of Dharma in the words of Mārīca. With the help of dharma, he integrates his entire life on the foundation of truth. The Ramayana has lessons for all ages; its message of Dharma is terrifically topical to us today amidst the confusion we live in. The Epic warns us of the disastrous consequences in pursuing *artha* and *kama* as ends in themselves discording all considerations of dharma. Sri Aurobindo's remark is apt

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1. Trinyeva vyasanānyatra kāmāyāni bhavantyuta
 mithayā vākyam paramakam
 tasmad gurintarakbhaw
 Paradharabhiganam vina vairam raudrata

with reference to the epic “not all perhaps can enter at once into the spirit of the masterpiece, but those who have once done so will never admit any poem in the world as its superior.”

The greatest book on Dharma in general and in all its ramification is Vyāsa's *Mahabharatha*. It comprises over a lakh of verses in all the 18 chapters. It is not only vast in its size but also sublime in its content. Ostensibly it is the saga of Kaurava and Pandava clans but in essence the heart and the focus of the epic is the description and function of Dharma, its glory and final victory. The victory of Dharma is the theme of the epic. Hence it is named, *Jaya*, of the four primary aspirations of man (purusharthas). “Whatever you find here may be found elsewhere, but what is not found here is found no where”¹. Tradition retails an incident “once the vedas and the Mahabharata were weighed in a scale, the Mahabharata was discovered to be weightier. Hence, it is described to be the *fifth veda*. In the heart of the Mahabharata, we have the immortal Bhagavad Gita, the thousand names

1 *Mahabharata* I—65—52

of Lord Visnu and Lord Śiva—(śahasranāmas) the teaching of the elder Bishama to Yudhistira etc. The glory of Dharma and its ways, its application are stated in all detail.

The concept of dharma generates a deep confidence in the minds of men that justice will prevail in the end. It is the undying faith in this concept that has unified the moral outlook of all the Indian sages in spite of the diversity in metaphysical theories. This is the common back ground to all Indian culture.

Rabindranath Tagore has often cited a passage from Manu which fills us with hope "By adharma man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root"¹

The central character of the Mahabharata, Yudhistira stood for Dharma against all odds and difficulties. But what makes me admire the great Epic is that every character even those who transgress Dharma violently, in the end become intensely aware of the individuality and glory of Dharma. Gāndhari the mother of Duryodhana is aware of the power of Dharma and when she receives her

¹ *Manu*, IV—174

son who comes for her blessings, she says, "victory to them that adhere to Dharma on their side".¹ Karna, when fighting with Yudhistira lets himself into admiration of his greatness and exclaims "If only, could purify myself by a touch of the shoulders of this personification of virtue, I would be happy".² The epic draws men to the path of dharma in very different ways. It exhorts dharma by describing the good it brings in its trail. It first seeks to attract men into the nimbus of dharma and after entering it they automatically go into the centre. It is highly revealing to note that when king Dhritarastra was told of the catastrophic end of his sons he said "verily, verily, it is impossible to set against God's by human endeavour (VI-122-120). The concluding verses of the Mahabharata are described as *Bharata Savitri*. They sing the glory of Dharma in a thundering voice with a moving lament in agony at the obtuseness of

1. Mahabharata. IX-63-62.

2. Ibid, VII-45-32.

See Ramayana also III-30

dharmat arthah prabhavate
 dharmat prabhavate sukham
 dharmena labhate sarvam
 dharmasaram idam jagat

the thoughtless transgressor of dharma. Vyasa exclaims in distress—"do not discard Dharma either out of fear or greed or for pleasure, nay not even for the sake of saving ones life; Dharma is eternal and our weal and woe that ensues from a contrary course are transient. He concludes the Epic "I throw up my hands in despair and shotut — alas, no one listens to me. Through Dharma one can achieve everything in life —wealth power, happiness and love, but who betakes to it."¹

From the different descriptions and accounts of Dharma in the epics, we find that it is the greatest integrating force in the life of man and society. It is a great stabiliser. If *Moksa* is translated as the Kingdom of God, Dharma is the kingdom of God on earth. In the Yajurveda Dharma is described "Dharma is the support of the whole world. In this world all people approach the man of dharma for guidance. By dharma sin

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1. "Urdhva -bahur niramyeshā na ca uschit
srnoti me
 dharmad arthaścha kamaścha sa kimartham
na sevyate "
 "na jatu kamāt, na lobhat
 na jivatasyapi hetoh
 dharmam tyajet "

is destroyed. In dharma everything is established. Therefore they say that Dharma is supreme".

The basic principle of Dharma is set forth by Bhishma in *Santi Parva* in its positive as well as in the negative aspects. What you desire for yourself you must desire for others. What you do not like others to do for you, you should not do to others. The concept of dharma gives us guide lines for all activities.

Absence of dharma will plunge us into absolute nihilism or cheap sensualism. Dharma gives shape, form and purpose to life.

Even the most cultivated among men will find a life of a dharma intolerable. Goethe writes: "that all epochs dominated by belief in whatever shape have a radiance and bliss of their own and bear fruit for their people as well as for posterity. All epochs over which unbelief in whatever forms maintains its miserable victory, are ignored by posterity because nobody likes to tug his life out over sterile things." Loss of faith in moral ideals and spiritual truths leads to ruin. Prof. C. C. Young writes: "After immense clinical experience over a period of thirty years, I find

among those in the second half of life that is over thirtyfive there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. When a modern physician is confronted with a neurotic patient he sees very clearly why his patient is ill, it arises from his having no love but only sexuality, no faith because he is afraid to grope in dark, no hope because he is disillusioned by the world and life, no understanding because he has failed to read the meaning of his own existence. What the patient needs are faith, hope, love and insight." ¹

It is the concept of *dharma* that Plato calls the Science of Good and Evil. "It is not the life of knowledge, not even if it included all the sciences, that creates happiness and well being but a single branch of knowledge—the science of Good and Evil. If you exclude this from other branches, medicine will be equally able to give us health, and shoe making shoes and wearing clothes. Seaman-ship will still save life at sea and strategy wins battles. But without the knowledge of good and evil, the use and the excellence of

1. C. G. Young. "Modern man in search of a Soul"

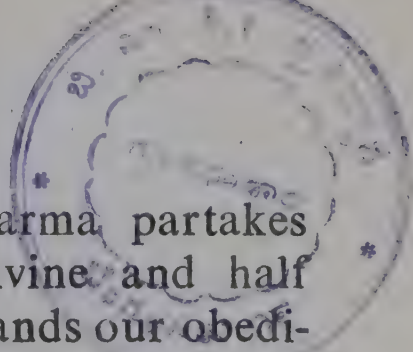
these sciences will be found to have failed us.”¹

The concept of Dharma is the basis of all social reconstruction. There is a controversy round the problem of dharma. One school of thought holds the view that Dharma is unchangeable and immutable. It is stated once for all in the source books, the *Śruti*, *Smṛiti*, *Dharma sūtras* and the *Dharma Sastras*. There is provision in it for any defined or undefined eventuality. We need not change it to suit our needs or times. We have to rise equal to it. Dharma is *sanātana*.

As against this view, there is the school that believes in Dharma *parivartana*. Thanks to the monumental researches of Prof. P. V. Kane and his several volumes on Dharma Sastras. He has proved to the hilt, with massive scholarship and authentic documentation that *Dharma* is undergoing change through the ages. Dharma is not a static compound of precepts set down for all ages, for any and every event. It has undergone change in response to the needs of the age and the developing social conscience of man. My esteemed teacher, Prof. D. S. Sarma

1. Plato's *Charmides* 174.

181.4



has described it best: "Dharma partakes of two natures. It is half divine and half human. Being divine it commands our obedience to its behests, being human it is subject to change with man's progress in knowledge."¹ Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, brings out the point with the help of an everyday analogy: Dharma is just like an elastic tune which clothes our growing body. If it is too tight, it will give way, we will have lawlessness, anarchy and revolution. If it is too loose, it will trip us and impede our movements"² Dharma in the language of philosophy is both *absolute* and *relative*.³ It is relative in the sense that what is Dharma for me is not the same for you. It is the absolute in the sense that my dharma is binding on me on all counts. The Hindu conception of Dharma has not remained theoretical and abstract. It has worked itself in the variegated concrete forms. There is a scheme of virtues incumbent on

1. D. S. Sarma.

2. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*, P. 11

3. The complex nature of the dharma is revealed in statements in Mahabharatha.

Tarko apratisthah śrutayo vibhinna naiko munir
yasya vacanam pramanam dharmasya tattvam
nihitam guhayam.

all mankind called *Sadharmā-dharma*. It insists on the practice of the following virtues : (1) steadfastness, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purity external and internal, etc. General good conduct requires men to practice these virtues. Besides these virtues, the Hindus have envisaged a detailed scheme of Dharma for individuals grouped under different castes (*varnas*) and in the different stages in life (*asramas*). The scheme together is broadly described as (*Varnasrama Dharma*).

The Hindu conception of human personality is described in the Gita in terms of his constitution. The constitution of all things and the beings in the world is *prakrti*.¹ Prakrti is the material out of which all things are made. Its constitutive stuff are the three gunas. They are all there in all things. But the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas vary in their proportion which gives rise to differences in the temperament of men. Sattva is responsible for lightness and illumination of things in nature. It brings out the best in us. All the

1. *Gita*, XVI, v-5 to 21.

See. A Huxley, *Perennial Philosophy*, chapter on *Religion and temperament*.

ethical scriptures exhort us to bring about the emergence of the Sattva in us and keep the *rajas* and *tamas* under check. *Rajas* is the source of all activities. It is of the nature of all desires and longings and cravings. *Tamas* is the nature of inertia. It resists all activity and obstructs all good. It is the cause of heaviness, sloth and mass. These three things are present in diverse measure in all of us. Integration can only be secured when there is the proper functioning of the *gunas*. The *gunas* propel the diverse functions. The Gita unequivocally affirms that "there is no existent thing in heaven or on earth, nor yet among Gods which is or ever could be free from these three constituents of *prakrti*."¹

There is an age long classification of men into four classes, *Brahmanas*, *Ksatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras* from the time of Rgveda down to the age of the Gita., The classification is made according to one's acts (*karma*) and character (*guna*). The Lord in the Gita declares: 'I established the four castes according to their *guna* and *karma*. The *guna* and *karma* of the four castes are described in Gita.² The Brahmin is the seer and has

1. *Gita*, XVIII-40.

2. *Ibid* XVIII-41 to 46.

tranquillity, self-control, austerity and stainless uprightness, and is forbearing. The *Ksatriya*, the warrior class is bold and he protects society and rules the country and keeps it free from its enemies. He is unflinching and fearless, subtle of skill, resolute, open-handed and great hearted. The traders¹ (Vysyas) provide goods for all and the fourth class (Sudras) gives its service to all.

The caste system in India is a very old institution that has been cried up and cried down. It seems at best to me an educational 'formulae' determining the duties of men according to their temperament, and worth and not mere birth. It is based on the (*svabhava*) of the individual.

The advocates of modernisation, have urged the absolute necessity of abolishing the caste system as the pre-condition of all progress. Some historians felt that caste and democracy are antithetical principles.¹ Caste is an irremovable status of man based on a concept of an essential inequality among men. So they pleaded for its abolition As against

1. See Sri K. M. Panikkar "Hinduism at cross Roads."

the defence, that the caste-system, encouraged the doctrine of *svadharma*, and made for specific excellence, and saved social waste, by ordaining each to follow the work and vocation in keeping with his temperament, the modernist answer is that in our industrial society there are no fixed duties or functions for definite castes. All that has disappeared today, and today everybody does every duty that gives him money to live. The hedious reality of the present day caste system with its ugly pendent "untouchability" has nothing in common with the said caste-system which aimed at a harmonious co-ordination of different men in the common task of the welfare of the community. The federal concept of the caste has yielded place to a pyramidical view of society, a fixity of heirarchiness, restraining inter-dining, inter-marriage and introducing concepts of pollution, which forbids all social contacts. The innumerable castes, and a large number being classed as untouchables has discredited the caste-system for all times. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan concludes "the system of caste whatever its historical significance, has no contemporary value. Today it insults the spirit of humanity and violates human dignity".

Caste in the words of late Dr. Ambedkar creates the out-caste.

The enormous evil that resulted from the wrong and selfish workings of the caste-systems is best exemplified in the bad lot of the untouchables and the severe strain they were put to till the law came to their relief. I am afraid that there is no use in merely abolishing untouchability on the statute books, but it must be banished from the structure of society. One of the characters in Mulk Rajanand's famous novel raised the tragic cry—"I am looked upon as unclean, because I keep others clean. Gandhiji sought all his life singly against this evil. The intensity of his annoyance is revealed in his memorable expression "I would far rather Hinduism died than untouchability lived .. I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that if I were the only person to resist the thing, I will resist it with my life." Gandhiji did something positive for the untouchables. He renamed them as the children of God (Harijans), and had the temples opened up for them to pray and restored them back to Hindu society, and removed the greatest strain on Hinduism.

Hindu social philosophy envisages a scheme of evolutionary development of man

through social-participation. The individual grows to his best by living with others. Growth in the self is achieved by active participation in social life of the community. The very process of human life involves the necessity of the society. Life is the gift of nature, but wise and intelligent living is the gift of wisdom. If any one attempts to live in complete seclusion from birth, he is bound to turn out to be an nerotic. Life is social in its essence. Growth is the process. What is potential and natural in man has to be helped by nature to grow. Time and planned human effort bear great fruits in the field.

The Hindu sages have outlined the four stages, well marked, in the development of an individual under the name '*asramas*' (training grounds). *Brahmacharya*, *Grahastya*, *Vana-prastha* and *Samnayasa*. The individual must acquire knowledge of the things of the world, moral ideas and ideals and spiritual truths early in life in an impressionable period.¹ This, he is asked to carry on, under a competent and

1. See William James observes in his *Principles of Psychology*

Outside of their business, ideas gained by men before they are twenty-five are practically the only ideas

illuminated guru, in the house of the guru. The teacher student relationship is hailed as the highest one. Going to the guru is not only to learn sacred texts, but also for secular and fine arts going to the guru is not an act of formality. It is a must. Mere self-study does not help men to acquire the required love. The guru is looked upon as superior to the parents who give birth to the child. Service to the Guru, the non-concern of all material wants, the intense desire for learning, the ample leisure and amicable atmosphere, and companionship of the age group, are all helpful in making one learn things and acquire a moral and idealistic turn of mind. The *gurukula vasa* was possible in the past because of the co-operation of the three elements enlightened teachers, moral society, and eager minded students. There is much to be said

they will have in their lives. They cannot get anything new. Disinterested curiosity is past, the mental grooves and channels are set, the powers of assimilation gave In all pedagogy, the great thing is to strike while the iron is hot, and seize the more of the pupils interest in each successive subject before the ideal has come, so that knowledge may be got and a habit of skill acquired--a headway or interest is short, secluded on which afterwards, the individual may float."

for the age and the values enthroned in the Gurukula system. The simplicity of the rural life of the asrama greatly accounts for the success. The general significance of Brahmacharya Asrama, it points out the absolute necessity for man is his life to devote at least a period of 15 years to acquire the necessary knowledge and sufficient skill to enter upon the duties of life in a complex and competitive society and to earn a modest competence to enable one to live and support his dependents. This is the period of preparation. The mind, the heart and the body must be trained and equipped with ideas. Lack of preparation is responsible for failure in life.

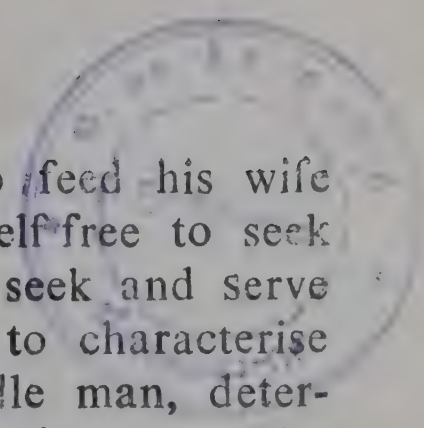
The second stage is that of the house holder.¹ It is the key-asrama. All the smrtis and dharma sastras have eulogised this stage as the elder stage *Jeysta-asrama*. In the words of Sri Rama krishna, "to live the life of a house holder is like living in a fort, thus protected one can fight better against ones passions and thirst for pleasure". The life of the house holder's stage gives man many opportunities to lead an ethical life and practice all virtues. He is

1. Manin VI-89.

the fine example of combining the method of *pravrtti* and *nivrtti*. It is like the linchpin in human society. The house holder acts as the support of the brahmacharin and Samnayasin. They rely on his services to sustain them. The eulogy put forth in the estimation of the house holder shows us how Indian Culture did not range on a severe life-denying asceticism and how it stood for the (*madhyama-marga*), the middle of the road the balance between the extremes.

The third stage – the *vanaprasta* – is a period of contemplation for the house holder to live apart from home in the spiritual companionship of his wife. He lives a life preparatory to the last stage of Samnayasa.

Samnyasa is a stage in the life of man. One has to qualify for it and acquires enough to renounce. One who has acquired nothing will have nothing to renounce. Renunciation in one form or other is central to Indian ethics. One cannot enjoy without renouncing. The Samnyasin is one who removes all the worldly attachments e.g., love of the house, family and wife, and owns nothing in life. He is completely and wholly devoted to the quest of moksa. He has no social obligations



in the sense he has to earn to feed his wife and children. He keeps himself free to seek the vision of the Lord and to seek and serve His cause. It is a caricature to characterise samnyasin as the life of an idle man, determined to live on another's income. The samnyasins by the powers of their *tapsya*, help mankind in ways we cannot describe. The Gita introduces the idea of samnyasa in all our activities to make it a lover of spiritual life. Karma Yoga implies the renunciation of the fruits of the activity, agency, and the renunciation of being inactive. It is freedom in action and not freedom from action. The Dharmatma of the Gita is an active samnyasin. He combines the excellence of the Yogas - Karma and Samnyasa - and leaves out their drawbacks. It is not hectic selfish activity nor lazy renunciation and do-nothingism. It is selfless activity dedicated to the Lord for the good of the world (*sarva-bootha hitha*) in accordance with ones *swabhava* and station in life.

The scheme of varnasrama dharma takes note of the importance of man's evolution in society. Though society ultimately exist in

the interest and for developing the individual, man has to grow with others. There is a strong solid sense in Hinduism.

The Hindu conception of society was not monolythic, but was pluralistic. Each grew to his best in his own way. The doctrine of svadharma insisted on in the Gita makes for grace and spontaniety in the growth of men. The Hindu ethics abhors a totalitarian outlook, which is out to regiment man's mind and thought. The individuals right to hold his own is acclaimed as the highest virtue. One is asked not to count any cost as too much in the maintenance of one's point of view and the right stand. Yuddhistira declares that he is willing to reject the whole universe to maintain his sense values. Sri Ramachandra in the epic declares again and again that he will give up Sita, if need be Lakshmana too and all, in order to keep his Dharma.

The supremacy of Dharma is upheld in all courts. The moral ideal has been dynamic and has also changed in answer to the changing needs of the times and men. The Hindu Law Digest writers (Nibandhas) have so modified and codified the regulations pertaining to Dharma, to bring it in time with the

demands of the enlightened social conscience of the age. Some of the writers on Dharma have forbidden the unsocial practices current in the past, for example—The Niyoga System (the Levirate), the eight types of marriages, and the ten classes of souls etc. The learned lawyer, the late Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, in his Kamala Lectures on the Evolution of the Hindu moral ideals, has traced the development and changes in Hindu Dharma through the ages.

The concept of Dharma has played the central role in the development of the character of individuals. Social legislation, legal punishment and institutional censure, did play but only a limited place in making men and women moral. By and large, the sense of Dharma and faith in its inviolability, made men moral. Prof. Bradley's observations are highly instructive in this context: "Moral institutions are carcasses without personal morality, and personal morality apart from moral institutions is an unreality, a soul without a body."¹

To the fundamental question as to what keeps society or a group of men or a nation,

1. F. H. Bradley Ethical studies Essay V.

or as a matter of fact the whole world in peace, what makes them flourish? The Mahabharata states :

“A people flourished not because of a constitution or coercion, or a Law giver, but because they are guided by Dharma, and help each other :

Naiva rajyam narad asti na
Dando na ca dandikah
dharmmnaiva praj h sarvāh
rakṣanti sma paratparam.

It is Dharma that counts in the last analysis. Plato in the Republic, the greatest and the earliest European classic on Social Philosophy asks us : “Do you imagine that political constitutions spring from a rock, or a tree and not from the dispositions of citizens, which turn the scale and draw all else in their direction — Constitutions are as the men are and grow out of their character.”

The great biographer of Buddha, Asvagosā, who wrote of his hero on the model of Valmiki is exhorts us all :

Prasāraya Dharma Dhvajam
Prapūraya Dharma Śankham
Pratīdaya Dharma Dundūbhim
Dharmam kuru, Dharmam kuru.

Flay the flag of Dharma, Sound the conch of Dharma pound loud the drum of Dharma, keep to Dharma, keep to Dharma, keep to Dharma.

THE SUPREME spiritual ideal for all the schools of Indian philosophy is Moksa. It is described as the *parama purusharta*. All the other values are oriented to it. *Dharma*, that golden word signifies within its simple confines all the wisdom and experience of centuries of Hindu wisdom. It not only regulates all instrumental values in their operation here and now, but also orients them to Moksa. Moksa is the most distinguishing character of Indian philosophy. The concept of Moksa is a religious ideal. It is the postulation of this ideal that is responsible for the close association of philosophy, with religion in all the Indian schools of thought. Further, it is a practical ideal which we are advised to seek for certain ends.

The Indian philosophical systems have analysed human experience and disclosed that man on earth is subject to a threefold suffering. The suffering results from Nature, from the Self and from Super-natural forces. Wisdom beckons men to put a radical end to all suffering by attaining Moksa. Hence, Moksa is a gospel of joy and is put forth as an urgent escape from a life of sorrow. In the state of Moksa, there is no tension or strife, and all doubts and disbeliefs are dispelled.

Moksa is the Indian pragmatic ideal which states that truth is the only sound guide for practice in man in his search for salvation and we are not to measure truth in terms of the practical.

The Upanishads, the Gita and Epics are all one in acclaiming that the chief destiny of man is Moksa and he must pursue that value and count no cost too much in the strife to attain it. Sanat Kumara holds out that moksa "is infinite happiness. There is no happiness in anything small only in (bhuma) the great is happiness. One must desire to attain the bhuma." Narada, after realising the futility of the knowledge of all our secular sciences separately seeks self knowledge for it enables him to cross over sorrow. Self-knowledge is described as the greatest value. The search for it is the greatest imperative of the scriptures. The scriptures seeks to interest men in its quest by extolling its profound value and by denouncing those who are indifferent to it by describing their immense loss. The *Chandoyoya* says he is a miserable man who lives and dies without striving for moksa

1. Chandogya VII-23

yo vai bhūmā tat sukham, nālpe sukham asti,
bhūmaiva sukham.

(a *krpanah*).¹ The *Kena* describes the man who does not strive for moksa as the one that has sustained the greatest loss (*mahati vinasti*).² The *Gita* holds the view 'that there is no greater gain for man after attaining moksa'.³ In the search for Moksa, men in the past have given up their all e.g., their belongings attachment to wife and children and pride of scholarship leaving all they have sought moksa as mendicants. The great poet Kalidasa, in the concluding verse of his famous drama *Shakuntala*, sends his prayer to the Lord to make him attain moksa and overcome rebirth. He writes "May the King exert himself for the good of his subjects, may literature great in its scriptures be honoured, may the self-existent God Siva united with Sakti, put an end also to my rebirth."⁴ The elder Bhisma gives a learned discourse on moksa dharma. The moksa

1. *Brhadaranyaka* III-8-10.

2. *Kena* II-II-5.

3. *Gitā*, VI 22

yaṁ labdhvā cā' param lābhaṁ manyate
nādhikaiṁ.

4. *Kālidāsa śakuntalam* : Last Verse : VII 34
mamāsi ca ksapayatu nilalohitah
punarbhavaṁ paragata śaktirātmabhuh

ideal has all along hovered and haunted the imagination, activities and the minds of the Hindus.

The need for moksa is disclosed by the analysis of human experience and man's desire to escape from the mixed nature of human life to unalloyed bliss. Professor Hiriyantha has clenched the issue in a neat paragraph: "Indian Philosophy aims beyond logic. This peculiarity of the view point is to be ascribed to the fact that philosophy in India did not take its rise in wonder or curiosity as it seems to have done in the West rather it originated under the pressure of a practical need arising from the presence of moral and physical evil in life. It is the problem of how to remove this evil that troubled the ancient Indians most and moksa in all the systems represents a state in which it is in one sense or another taken to have been overcome. Philosophic endeavour was directed primarily to find a remedy for the ills of life."¹

1. M. Hiriyantha, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*,
P 18.

The nature of moksa is in essence a type of primary experience that is integral. It is not like reverie, dream or hallucination. It is not a drug induced experience. It is a total experience where one feels a complete sense of life's fruition and suffers from no privation whatever. There is no diminution or return to the world of *samsara* from that bliss. It is a state of unexcellable bliss. It is described in Upanisads "as the nature of truth that gives life repose, it fills the mind with joy and spreads full peace."¹ Moksa is an imperative of sensible undertaking of man for peace.

Moksa is not realised in a vacuum, but in the midst of our life here and now. It may not be a social product, but is achieved by right living here and now. The training insisted on for realising moksa gives up a prominent and necessary place for morality and Dharma. Ethical excellence is the fundamental prerequisite of all spiritual life. God can never be realised by by-passing the good life. The Upanisad declares "not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a

1. Taithiriya 1-6-2 "Satyātma, prānārāmam
mana ānandam sānti samrddham"

concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can realise the self through knowledge,"¹

The author of Gita categorically states "thoughtless men whose souls or undisciplined do not find God even though they strive." Krishna adds "He who has full faith and zeal and who has subdued his senses obtaining divine experience, and once when he obtains it he soon gets "peace". The negative side of it is also stated: "The ignorant and the one who has no faith and who always doubts, goes to ruin. There is no salvation, nor happiness for the man here who always doubts."² The concept of moksa is the fulfilment of the adherence to all the other three values in the manner required.

1. Katha I-2-24

Nāvirato duśaritān nāsanto
nāsamahitah nāsanta māraso vāpi
prajnarenainam apnuyāt.

2. Gita IV 39-40.

sraddhavān labhate jñānam
tat Paraho samyatendhiyah
jñānam labdhvā parāmś antim
acirena adhigacchati.
agnasca Braddhadhanasca
samsayatma vinasyati
na yam loko asti na par
na sukham samsayatmanah.

The concept of moksa affirms the divine aspect of man's nature and discloses his spiritual essence and potentialities. It treats man not as a mere object among other objects, for he is the subject. The physical and the psychical aspects do not exhaust the nature of man. It leaves out the spiritual and makes the picture incomplete.

The concept of moksa has taken an Indian thought, three distinct forms in the background of a complete acceptance that moksa is the chief axiological value for man. The state opposed to moksa is described as *bondage* of Samsāra. It is a state of man's unregenerate life and is clouded by ignorance (*ajnāna*). To Sri Sankara, moksa is the destruction of ajnana, which is responsible for the illusion of the plurality. The destruction of ajnana is the same as moksa. The individual soul who thinks delusively that he is a banished stranger tied down to a body of lust, with no glimmer of wisdom, comes to realise that he is Brahman with the onset of experience. Moksa is native to the soul of man. It is not derivative or bestowed by any one else. It is man's spiritual birth right, and not the exclusive possession of some only. It is not something that is produced new (*utpādaya*).

It is a making known of a what is already there and not a bringing into being something which is not there. It is 'the uncreated light' in us. It is not an attainment of something that we do not have (prāpya). It is also not transformation of something into something else (samskarya). It is the natural state of the soul (sahajāvastha) which is hidden by ignorance. Such in short is the Advaita view of moksa. The theistic Vedantins explain moksa as the greatest and exclusive gift of the Lord to men proceeding from his infinite grace and compassion. Moksa is the result of (prasada) grace, and not a mere human effort. It is not self-extinction, it is attaining fellowship with the Lord and perfecting one's self in self-surrendering devotion to the Lord.

A third view of moksa is envisaged by the schools of Buddhism and Jainism who hold the view that moksa is the destruction of the ego in a man completely by a firm or severe self-effort backed by a systematic discipline of self-culture based on *virtue, concentration and wisdom*—(Sīla, Sāmadhi and Prajna). Men can attain it by self-effort and not by the grace from any external source. Buddha exhorts man in the version of Sir Edwin Arnold :

“ Seek nought from helplessness Gods by gift
and hymn. Nor bribe with blood, nor feel
with fruits and cakes within yourself deliverance
must be sought. Each man his passion makes.”

Moksa is the master passion of all Indian thought and all agree that it is the destiny of man and chief aspiration of his life.

A few critics of the concept hold the view that the major pre-occupation of the mind of Indians in their striving for moksa, breeds indifference, and contempt for the fine things of the world and consequently ethical life loses all its significance.

Indian thought has recognised the value of moksa, not to the neglect of the other three values and aspirations of human life, but as their fulfilment. The Hindus never held a negative view of life, as it is clear from our account of the first two purusharthas. Samsara in the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan “is a succession of spiritual opportunities!” The world is the training ground and vale for the art of soul-making in the words of the poet Keats. Our upanisads have described two chief characteristics of spiritual experience: (a) its *uniqueness* and (b) the perversiveness of the spirit of Reality experienced in moksa.

The consciousness of the perversive nature of Reality and its in during presence in all the manifestations of Reality, spontaneously creates in us 'a reverence for life' in all creation. It is the fundamental consciousness of the presence of this Reality in all that makes for the fellowship of all human beings. We come to feel from the depths of our spiritual experience of all existence in this world of facts and values is informed and sustained by the spirit. It is spiritual experience that is responsible for our feeling in the words of Gandhiji "there cannot be happiness for any of us until it is won for all." The feeling that all weal and woe are integral is disclosed to us in moksa. It is this realisation that spurs us on men into the service of humanity in different forms. The man who has spiritual experience feels the truth or ethical values on his pulses and they burn into him, and flow out from him spontaneously without any strain. He reveals virtues without the sense of constraint or effort.

